

# DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

## **CLARIFYING THE STATE PLANNING PRIORITIES**

AB 857 (Chapter 1016, Statutes of 2002) established three state planning priorities. Any Environmental Goals and Policy Report (EGPR) prepared after January 1, 2004, must be consistent with the priorities. Additionally, after January 1, 2005, all state entities' functional plans must be consistent with the priorities, and state entities must demonstrate this consistency through annual reports to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR). Also after January 1, 2005, any state agency requesting infrastructure to be included in the state's annual five-year infrastructure plan, prepared by the Department of Finance in conjunction with the Governor's Budget, must demonstrate how that infrastructure is consistent with the three planning priorities.

As stated in the legislation, the intent of the three priorities is to "to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety in the state, including in urban, suburban, and rural communities." This intent language is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. The three planning priorities suggest specific ways in which State government can prioritize activities related to infrastructure spending and land use to promote more sustainable development in California. They have equal weight and are meant to work in unison. Their order of listing in statute is not an indication of ranking of importance.

The following is a discussion of the three planning priorities as OPR interprets them.

### **Community Revitalization Planning Priority**

#### **What the priority tells the State to do:**

- Rehabilitate, maintain, and improve existing infrastructure that supports infill development and appropriate reuse and redevelopment of previously developed, underutilized land that is presently served by transit, streets, water, sewer, and other essential services, particularly in underserved areas
- Preserve cultural and historic resources

**The goal of this priority:** More infill development and greater equity in existing communities, regardless of type or location (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural).

**OPR Discussion:** Infill development is an important alternative to inefficient growth patterns. Building our communities inward rather than outward can have a number of benefits. However, infill is often impeded by aging infrastructure in developed areas that cannot support additional development. The State can help make infill possible by ensuring that existing infrastructure in developed areas is rehabilitated, maintained, and improved. This priority is about making sure that our existing communities (population centers) are kept vital through continued investment and that we make use of available land within existing communities to accommodate growth. (See attached definitions: Infill).

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## **Natural Resources Planning Priority**

**What the priority tells the State to do:** Protect, preserve, and enhance the state's most valuable natural resources, including working landscapes such as farm, range, and forest lands; natural lands such as wetlands, watersheds, wildlife habitats, and other wildlands; recreation lands such as parks, trails, greenbelts, and other open space; and landscapes with locally unique features and areas identified by the state as deserving special protection.

**The goal of this priority:** A healthy natural environment, productive working landscapes, including agricultural lands, and enough parks and open space to provide recreational opportunities for all Californians.

**OPR Discussion:** Undeveloped lands should not be viewed as a blank canvas for development but recognized for their intrinsic value as environmental and economic resources. This priority aims to discourage new urban development from using up open space and resource lands that are needed for other purposes (e.g., food production, recreation, ecosystem health, species protection) and that contain limited or sensitive resources that are at risk of irretrievable loss through urbanization. State policies and practices should discourage greenfield development or at least require consideration of alternative development options.

## **Efficient Development Planning Priority**

**What the priority tells the State to do:** Ensure that any infrastructure funded in whole or in part by the State and associated with development that is not infill supports new development that uses land efficiently, is built adjacent to existing developed areas, is in an area appropriately planned for growth, is served by adequate transportation and other essential utilities and services, and minimizes ongoing costs to taxpayers

**The goal of this priority:** More efficient development patterns.

**OPR Discussion:** This priority acknowledges the reality that all new development in California cannot and will not occur inside existing communities and urban areas. To accommodate a growing population, many communities will have to grow outward. However, growing outward does not have to equal sprawl and/or leapfrog development. New development can be efficient, well planned, and adjacent to existing communities. It can be compact, use land and resources efficiently, and minimize conversion of natural resource lands, agricultural lands, and open space. The State can ensure that money for new infrastructure goes to support compact, efficient development rather than sprawl.

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The three planning priorities are codified in Section 65041.1 of the Government Code. The verbatim text of the code section is as follows:

**65041.1.** The state planning priorities, which are intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety in the state, including in urban, suburban, and rural communities, shall be as follows:

(a) To promote infill development and equity by rehabilitating, maintaining, and improving existing infrastructure that supports infill development and appropriate reuse and redevelopment of previously developed, underutilized land that is presently served by transit, streets, water, sewer, and other essential services, particularly in underserved areas, and to preserving cultural and historic resources.

(b) To protect environmental and agricultural resources by protecting, preserving, and enhancing the state's most valuable natural resources, including working landscapes such as farm, range, and forest lands, natural lands such as wetlands, watersheds, wildlife habitats, and other wildlands, recreation lands such as parks, trails, greenbelts, and other open space, and landscapes with locally unique features and areas identified by the state as deserving special protection.

(c) To encourage efficient development patterns by ensuring that any infrastructure associated with development that is not infill supports new development that uses land efficiently, is built adjacent to existing developed areas to the extent consistent with the priorities specified pursuant to subdivision (b), is in an area appropriately planned for growth, is served by adequate transportation and other essential utilities and services, and minimizes ongoing costs to taxpayers.

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## KEY TERMS

### **INFILL**

New development and redevelopment within the existing developed footprint of a community, either on vacant land or on previously developed, underutilized land. “Community” means either an incorporated area or a developed unincorporated area. (Note: This definition is purposely broader and more flexible than some other definitions of infill, as shown on the next page.)

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving a sustainable state depends on balancing economic, environmental, and social needs.

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The following terms are presented in hierarchical order. A definition and an example are provided for each.

### **PRINCIPLE**

A fundamental rule, doctrine, or assumption.

Example: Economic prosperity is dependent on decent affordable housing for all economic segments of the population.

### **GOAL**

The end, condition, or state toward which action is directed; a general direction-setter. A goal is approached by more specific policies.

Example: Decent affordable housing for all economic segments of the population.

### **POLICY**

A specific statement that guides decision-making and indicates a commitment to a particular course of action. A policy is carried out by one or more implementation measures.

Example: It shall be the policy of the State to provide financial incentives to local governments and housing developers to build affordable housing.

### **IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE**

An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out policy. Each policy must have at least one corresponding implementation measure.

Example: The Affordable Infill Housing Incentives Program will award grants to cities and counties for infrastructure rehabilitation and expansion in conjunction with an affordable housing project in an infill area.